

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7985
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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TAGS: PGOV, CI
GOC MOVES ON FOREIGN MINISTRY REORGANIZATION PLANS

1. THE GOC IS MOVING TO REORGANIZE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.
DL 2073 OF DECEMBER 16, 1977 CREATED THE POSITION OF
VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, WITH THE TITLE OF
"

CLOSEST COLLABORATORS TO THE MINISTER IN FOREIGN POLICY
MATTERS, AND MAKES THE INCUMBENT "SUPERVISOR AND GENERAL
COORDINATOR OF ALL THE MINISTRY'S SERVICES". DL 2101 OF
JANUARY 12, 1978, TITLED "REORGANIZATION OF THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY", CITES A NEED TO MODERNIZE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY
AND GIVES THE PRESIDENT TIME FRAMES IN WHICH TO ACCOMPLISH
IT: 180 DAYS IN WHICH TO COME UP WITH A REORGANIZATION
PLAN AND IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS; 200 DAYS (RUNNING CON-
CURRENTLY) IN WHICH TO ESTABLISH NEW STAFFING LEVELS AND
OBTAIN FINANCE MINISTRY CONCURRENCE; AND 60 DAYS (ON
TOP OF THE 180) DURING WHICH PINOCHET CAN ASSIGN PER-
SONNEL FREELY "WITHOUT REGARD TO NORMAL RULES AND
RESTRICTIONS ON PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS" WITHIN THE
NEW STAFFING PATTERN.

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2. SUPREME DECREES 12 (JAN 2) AND 30 (JAN 11)
DESIGNATED BRIGADIER GENERAL ENRIQUE VALDES PUGA AND
COLONEL ROBERTO SOTO MACKENNEY AS VICE MINISTER AND
UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS RESPECTIVELY.
BOTH ARE ARMY OFFICERS AND PINOCHET CONFIDANTS: VALDES
IS THE PRESENT MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY, WHILE SOTO IS
THE MILITARY ATTACHE IN BUENOS AIRES.

3. COMMENT: THE GOC DECISION TO REORGANIZE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY CORRESPONDS TO A REALIZATION THAT CHILE'S PRESENT DIPLOMATIC POSITION IS UNIQUE. THE STRUCTURE AND HABITS THAT SERVED IT WELL IN A GENERALLY FRIENDLY WORLD MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE IN A MORE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT. AT A MINIMUM A NEW STRUCTURE WILL PERMIT EITHER THE FOREIGN MINISTER OR THE INCUMBENT OF THE NEW VICE MINISTER POSITION TO SPEND MORE TIME ABROAD; AND, IF THE LATTER, WITH HIGHER RANK AND PRESTIGE. THE REORGANIZATION ALSO REFLECTS CONTINUED GOC DISTRUST OF ITS PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MORE MILITARY MEN WILL BE BROUGHT INTO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY; EVEN, IF NOT, THE SWEEPING POWERS GIVEN PINOCHET IN DL 2101 WILL ENABLE THE GOC TO MOVE THE CAREER MEN UP OR DOWN IN PARTIAL DISREGARD TO RANK AND SENIORITY. WHILE PAY LEVELS REPORTEDLY WILL BE PROTECTED, PRESUMABLE A NUMBER OF SENIOR DIPLOMATS WILL CHOOSE TO RETIRE OR RESIGN. THIRD, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, BY PROMOTING VALDES AND NAMING ANOTHER ARMY OFFICER TO THE THIRD POSITION, THE REORGANIZATION REPRESENTS AN APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL PINOCHET EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND IN THE DAILY ADMINISTRATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. LANDAU

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